

July 18, 2003

Barry S. Drucker
Minerals Management Service
381 Elden Street, MS 4030
Herndon, VA 20170-4817

Dear Mr. Drucker:

This letter is the ninth Bi-Monthly Status Letter for Cooperative Agreement Number 1435-01-02-CA-85050, *Field Testing of a Physical/Biological Monitoring Methodology for Offshore Dredging and Mining Operations*.

Task 1: Biology: Robert Diaz and Janet Nestlerode report that fish and invertebrate tissue samples collected for stable isotope analysis were sent to the University of California at Davis Stable Isotope Facility for analysis. The gut content samples from fishes collected by trawl continue to be analyzed. Video transect analysis continues. Post-dredge sampling is scheduled to take place in early August 2003.

Task 2: Shoreline and Beach Studies: Scott Hardaway and Donna Milligan report that they surveyed Sandbridge Beach in May 2003 bringing the total number of surveys to 6. They attempted to survey in June 2003 but encountered mechanical problems during the survey such that they only collected data on one small section of shore at Dam Neck. They plan to collect data the week of July 14th as for the post fill survey. They received data from the Navy's April survey of Dam Neck. They are in the process of comparing data they collected with the ATV to the traditional survey data collected in the same time frame as a large scale verification of our methods. Finally, they are continuing to work on analyzing the profile data taken in the 1990s by Dr. David Basco of Old Dominion University at Sandbridge in order to provide a framework to which they can add their new monthly data.

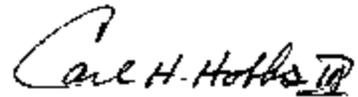
Task 3: Bottom Imagery and Bathymetry: There is no report at this time as Dr. McNinch is away from campus.

Task 4: Wave Studies: Jerome Maa reports that since the last status letter he has acquired a Furuno 8251 marine radar with an 8 ft open array antenna and has begun the familiarization process. He has tentatively identified a site for gaining experience with the system including capturing video and trigger signals however there is a potential problem with interference with another radio device. He anticipates resolving the problem during the next reporting period and continuing with testing and development. Finally, he is continuing work on image analysis using artificially generated images.

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Task 5: Project Management. There are no problems to report. In early July we met to review our progress toward project goals. Overall, we are on track for completion of the project by the scheduled date of December 2004. It appears that the present “post dredging” activities may double as “pre dredging” work for nourishment that we understand may be scheduled for this fall. We take this to be a successful example of “adaptive management.” It would be a help to us if MMS would obtain the (electronic) bathymetric data from the Corps’s of the contractors pre and post surveys of the borrow area. At times obtaining data from the Corps is not as easy as one might desire as assisting an outside agency is, understandably, not a major priority. It might be more efficient if MMS as the federal agency controlling the sand resource were to request the data.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl H. Hobbs, III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a small 'III' at the end.

Carl H. Hobbs, III
Associate Professor and Project Manager

Copy: MMS: J. Kendall, W. Adcox, J. Rowland, R. Amato
VIMS: R. Diaz, J. Nestlerode, J. McNinch, S. Hardaway, D. Milligan, J. Maa,
C. Harris, M. Fonner